

MENNONITE HISTORICAL BULLETIN

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No. 2

A Short Biography of David G. Kauffman

HOPE KAUFFMAN

Stephen and Mary King Kauffman of Garden City, Missouri, named their new son David Gideon. Born on May 2, 1878, he was the sixth of eight children. Nearly twenty-four years later, on January 30, 1902, he was married to Anna King, daughter of Abraham and Mattie Yoder King of West Liberty, Ohio. According to his son Carl, he and his wife lived on the home place in Missouri, where their six children were born, until March 1916. A record by David's own hand indicates that he arrived in North Dakota on March 23, 1916. The family home was built near Minot.

The six children born to David and Anna were Carl; Nelson; and two sets of twins, Floy (Mrs. Wallace Kauffman) and Floyd; and Harold and Herbert (deceased). David loved singing; in the early years in North Dakota he taught singing classes at various places in that state and in Montana. His major contribution to the church in those years was that of a sincere Christian father and layman. Although at times he served as trustee, mission board member, or visitation committee-man, his influence was decisive in the home. His children are a living testimony of this. Nelson and Floyd are bishops in the Mennonite Church; Carl is a deacon; and Floy, a minister's wife.

On August 7, 1954, at the age of seventy-six, he passed on, eight and one-half years after his wife. After her death he spent much of his time traveling and helping with building projects at a number of mission communities in the Middle West. The material and spiritual support he gave was his major contribution to the church in his later years, and it is chiefly to these last eight years that this article pertains.

One of the first places where David Kauffman made his influence felt during this period was in northern Minnesota at White Earth, specifically in the building of the Strawberry Lake Church house. His contributions to this community continued until his last sickness shortly before his death.

He was already sixty-eight years



DAVID G. KAUFFMAN, 1878-1954

old when he was asked to direct the building of the church at Strawberry Lake. Andrew Glick of North Dakota writes, "His wide experience at building and handling men fitted him especially to serve as a 'boss.' It frequently happened that groups of men came together here and there with no organization, some with little experience, and often there was no leader among them. It was then that 'Grandpa Kauffman' (as he was familiarly known) filled a large place in the work.

"He gave much material and financial aid to the work and to the workers at this place (White Earth). His contributions were not all in the line of material things. He had a keen interest in the spiritual welfare of the church."

Llewellyn Groff, of Omega, Minnesota, worked with David Kauffman in this community. He writes, "After he saw the poor farm machinery we used, he bought a tractor, disk, cultivator, loader, plow." Later on Brother Kauffman purchased a used Dodge car, "an old new Dodge car, as they called it, to haul people to Bible School, Sunday school, and Church." Another purchase was a set of 32-volt batteries and a generator which he installed in the large three-car garage he had built for the mission workers, thus providing them with electric lights.

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Brief Biographical Sketch of Jacob Wisler, 1808-89

J. C. WENGER

Born in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, October 31, 1808, the eighth child of Christian Wisler and Susan Holdeman, Jacob Wisler moved with his parents to Columbiana County, Ohio, about 1820. There he grew to manhood and on November 19, 1827 he married Mary Hoover (1818-60), daughter of David L. Hoover, who had been born in Lancaster County, Pa., and Esther Lehman, who had been born in Franklin County, Pa. To this union were born at least seven children: Deacon David (1830-1902); Hannah (1832-99), who was mentally ill; three daughters, Susanna (1834-1903); Magdalena (1836-85); and Mary (1840-84), who married three Culp brothers, Henry, David, and Joseph G. respectively; Elizabeth, who died as a child; and John H. (1842-1916), the famous importer of Belgian horses. In 1833 Jacob was ordained to the ministry, certainly in the Midway Church (then in Columbiana, now in Mahoning County, Ohio) and almost certainly by Bishop Jacob Nold. In 1848 he and his family moved to Elkhart County, Indiana, and settled on a farm in Sec. 19 of Harrison township, one mile north of the Yellow Creek Church and two and three-fourths miles west. His second wife was Catherine Knopp (1819-88); this union was childless. In 1850 Bishop Martin Hoover, 89, died at Yellow Creek. In 1851 Bishop Abraham Rohrer of Medina County, Ohio, who had ordained Hoover bishop just before he came to Elkhart County in 1845, came to the Yellow Creek Church and ordained Wisler as bishop. The following meetinghouses were in the district before 1865: Yellow Creek, Shaum, Holdeman, Blosser, Christophel, and Clinton Brick.

Wisler's conservative attitudes caused Preacher Joseph Rohrer to leave the Mennonite Church and unite with the Evangelical Church. Wisler also did not get along well with Deacon Joseph Holdeman of the Holdeman Congregation. Much more serious were his differences with Preacher Daniel Brenneman of

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His interest in the work at White Earth was permanent, for he purchased forty acres of land near the church on which he built himself a cabin, a second cabin for the church, and a house for Gerald Derstine, one of the workers at this mission church. He spent his last summers there, helping with the work as well as diverting himself with fishing and gardening.

David Kauffman also helped to build the church at Loman, another mission station in northern Minnesota. Irwin Schantz of Loman writes, "Brother Kauffman spent the summer of 1948 at Loman helping to build the church. He was overseer and worked well with those who helped. . . . He was always cheerful and willing to do what he could."

Although his concern for the work in Minnesota was constant, he also saw needs and opportunities at other places. He gave of his time, effort, and means for the mission work at Hannibal, Missouri, where his son Nelson was then pastor. Here he spent about eight months helping to remodel the mission home, bringing along his electric saw and many other tools. Mrs. Nelson Kauffman writes that "he gave of his services free of charge and donated besides. He was up early and only rested a little while after dinner." At another time he spent six months at Hannibal, repainting the church basement and helping in the visitation work. Mrs. Kauffman says, "He endeared himself to everyone in the congregation."

Brother Kauffman also helped to build the Bethel Springs Mennonite School near Culp, Arkansas. Again he served as advisor and supervisor. Merle E. Yoder, Belleville, Pennsylvania, one of the construction unit members, writes, "However, he was not the usual type of supervisor. He worked right along with us four young men and showed great patience with such 'green' builders as we were. He took time to show me how to do electrical wiring.

"I never heard anyone speak an unkind word about him. Everyone seemed to respect his ideas and his ways of working. Naturally, 'Grandpa Kauffman' had his shortcomings, but they were so badly outnumbered we ignored them, and today I can't even remember what they might have been." Chester J. Kenagy, also of Belleville, Pennsylvania, and another unit member, writes, "He seemed to have much pleasure in serving in this lowly way for the Lord and the Church."

By 1947 the school building was sufficiently finished for use. Brother Kauffman, now nearly seventy, felt

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Book Reviews

The Recovery of the Anabaptist Vision; a Sixtieth Anniversary Tribute to Harold S. Bender, edited by Guy F. Hersberger; Scottdale, Pa., Herald Press (1957); \$3.60 pages; \$4.50.

Although our Swiss-German ancestors kept contact with their Anabaptist forebears through the *Martyrs Mirror*, the *Ausbund*, the writings of some of the Anabaptist leaders, and confessions of faith, they gave little thought to the essence of Anabaptism and its role in history. With the awakening of the Mennonite Church in the past century, there has come an interest in an examination of the fountain from which we spring. This historical interest has been anticipated and supported by the work of scholars outside our own greater Mennonite brotherhood. In the earlier years researchers were few, resources comparatively scanty. In the last three decades there has been a multiplication of both researchers and resources. The once despised, misunderstood Anabaptists have finally found favor. Our own people have come to know the heroes of faith who have gone before them. Church historians still call the Anabaptists a radical wing of the Reformation, but they pronounce the word radical with a new tone.

In December, 1943, the American Society of Church History first heard Harold S. Bender describe the "Anabaptist vision." Published in *Church History*, reprinted in the *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, and reprinted a number of times as a pamphlet, "The Anabaptist Vision" has become a classic document—a concise statement of the character and significance of Anabaptism. It was a sort of first fruit in the series of interpretative studies that have resulted from the recent upsurge in Anabaptist studies.

For while "The Anabaptist Vision" summarized Anabaptism, it was too brief to satisfy those who were asking for more extensive discussions of various aspects of the movement. People were wondering about the beliefs and practices of the Anabaptists on such questions as the nature of the church, individual responsibility, relations to the state, attitudes toward wealth and human relations, the relations of the Anabaptists to other Reformers, their impact on society, and their relation to the early church and to present Protestantism. Other scholars beside Brother Bender were doing significant research in these areas.

July 19, 1957, on board an ocean liner H. S. Bender opened a package containing a volume designed as a tribute to him on his sixtieth

birthday anniversary. It was *The Recovery of the Anabaptist Vision*—a series of essays by twenty-two persons who have been active in research in Anabaptist history. Divided into four groups, these essays deal with Anabaptist research and interpretation, the rise of Anabaptism, the theology of Anabaptism, and Anabaptism in history. With so many persons contributing to the volume, it is only to be expected that each reader will respond differently to the individual essay. The average reader will find some essays a bit heavy. Other essays, equally valuable, will speak in terms and of things with which he is more familiar. Some will take several readings before their message becomes meaningful. Some persons may want to browse in it, reading an essay here and an essay there. Others will read it from cover to cover and then start over again. It is a book that the non-Mennonite scholar of church history will rank among the "musts" for an understanding of the Anabaptist-Mennonite movement. Mennonites owe it to themselves to study the book for the understanding it will give them of their own spiritual heritage.

Guy F. Hersberger, the editor, is to be commended for the work he has done in collecting these essays and seeing them through the various stages of publication. The magnitude of his achievement is heightened by the fact that he was able to solicit the help of so many of Brother Bender's associates without allowing Brother Bender to suspect the tribute coming to him in the form of this book. —N. P. Springer

God Uses Ink, The Heritage and Mission of the Mennonite Publishing House After Fifty Years. Written by John A. Hostetler. Published by Herald Press, Scottdale, Pa., 1953. Pp. 264, illustrated. \$2.75.

Much is in a title. Editors and publishers are no doubt right when they favor manuscripts with arresting and meaningful titles. Little in this title indicates a work of historical scholarship, although it is that. The author wears his learning lightly, much to the profit of the reader and, one suspects, to the historian. The careful organization of the materials, the documentation in notes and appendices, as well as the attention to details reveal clearly an historian at work. Important to the author, also, is interpretation and perspective. The book is a specialized piece of historical writing—the recent history of one particular activity of a religious denomination in the United States and Canada—but this is seen within the framework of the denomination's larger history

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and faith, and, as the main title implies, in relation to the work of God in history.

Specifically, the book is the story of the Mennonite Publishing House at Scottdale, Pennsylvania, now remembering fifty years of life and work. As such it is the history of a denominational publishing venture, that of the (Old) Mennonite Church. More comprehensively, however, the book covers the antecedents of Scottdale, the activities of Mennonite printing and publishing when they were still in private hands for the most part. The first third of the book is about these earlier enterprises. Here the author throws some new light on old subjects, but his principal contribution is the full history of the Mennonite Publishing House.

The strengths of this book are many. It is a useful historical work both as an account to read and study as well as a compendium to consult. For the latter purpose the index might have been fuller. Judged by the aim of the author, to provide a report to the Mennonite constituency, it is both factual and readable. As intimated above, this is no dry history book. It contains much of human interest; the characters are convincing; they come to life. There are overtones of humor, and one sees both the strong points and foibles of leaders. The author is keenly sensitive to spiritual issues. The reader remembers the piety of the Funks, the spiritual breadth of Aaron Loucks, the firm convictions of Daniel Kauffman, John Horsch, and others. The chapter about "The Mennonite Book and Tract Society," since it pertains primarily to an organization, comes less to life, possibly because the author did not have access to materials about a personality as much alive as John W. Weaver.

The chief point of strength is certainly the interpretation and perspective the author provides. He knows the problems faced by denominational publishers in America today; he is aware of the problems and opportunities faced by Mennonites. In the last chapter, "The Impact of the Press," he seeks to evaluate the past and look into the future. The Christian historian may be able to obtain at least a glimpse to see how God uses ink. Have souls been won into the Kingdom, have Christians been richly nurtured by the work of the press? How has the printed page nourished the fruit of the Spirit? One notes that John F. Funk and other leaders expressed the concern that publishing promote the unity of the church. The setting up of press services abroad holds

promise of expanding witness and unity. As organization expands and maintenance increases, will our Publishing House remain a pliable instrument in God's hand, or will it become a structure eventually to be succeeded by new and fresh movements?

God Uses Ink is a comprehensive and accurate historical account of Mennonite printing and publishing efforts in America. Because it honors the reader with a simple but vigorous style, but especially because it has a Christian perspective on publishing, it deserves wide reading. Some day, possibly fifty years from now, the history of Mennonite publishing in America will be written again. By that date, one does not hesitate to predict, the total Mennonite publishing efforts in the United States and Canada will be treated in a single volume. The writings by John Herr, the books and pamphlets of the Old Order Amish and Holde-man people, as well as the full literature program of the General Conference Mennonites are an integral part of the history of Mennonite publishing in the New World.

I. B. H.

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at home among the Arkansas mission communities, and for a time he gave serious thought to building a little home there. This he decided against, however, in favor of Minnesota.

In Arkansas, as in other places, his contributions were spiritual as well as material. Frank Horst writes that during a series of revival meetings, "It was largely through his influence that one man of the community decided to accept Christ as Saviour. This family often mentioned the good influence of Brother Kauffman."

About 1946 he began to walk with some difficulty, using a cane. Among the Arkansas timbers he found a unique growth of a wild grape vine and cut it, trimmed it, and used it for a cane as long as he lived. Frank Horst recalls, "He accepted his lameness gracefully and it seemed to add to his pleasant personality. There was that something about him that attracted people to him and to the Christ he loved and served so well."

The full measure of David Kauffman's contributions to the building of the Church of Christ can be known only by God, whom he served so faithfully. "Grandpa Kauffman" loved life, and he lived for eternity.

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News and Notes

REVIVALS. Dirk Philips, we noted in the last issue of the *Bulletin*, has been the subject of some new scholarly and popular interest. Another 16th-century Anabaptist figure undergoing a second look at present is Hans Denk. "Second look" is hardly correct, for the full-length books about him number at least six, not to mention many articles. During his short life, the dates of which are ca. 1500 to 1527, he exerted strong leadership among the Anabaptists of South Germany. Furthermore, his religious views reflected a genial piety and a high degree of intelligence. Most historians in recent years, however, have been inclined to consider Denk a marginal Anabaptist, due to the mystical strain of his thought. The most recent estimation comes in the form of a doctoral thesis, done by Jan Kiwiet, a Dutch Baptist, who has studied at the University of Zürich. During the past year Kiwiet, while on a study grant in the States, spoke at several of our Mennonite colleges and finally prepared a synopsis of his thesis in written form for the pages of the *M. Q. R.* (October, 1957, pp. 227-259.) Denk, Kiwiet holds, was the founder of the South-German Anabaptist group which is generally associated with Pilgram Marpeck. This wing, he believes, arose more or less independently of the Swiss Brethren; its religious life was theologically oriented, "with love and obedience as its center," as compared to the more strict Biblicism and spiritualism of other wings of the movement. Aside from bringing a third wing into the picture, this rehabilitates the character of Hans Denk and places him in the first magnitude of Anabaptist leadership. Coinciding with Kiwiet's study is the publication of a textual edition of all of Denk's writings by the Täuferakten-Kommission.

Kiwiet's rehabilitation of Denk reminds one of a similar work undertaken before the war by Roland Bainton in regard to another prominent Anabaptist leader, David Joris, also a spiritualist and influential

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 Personal letters from Andrew Glick, Minot, N. D.; Llewellyn Groff, Ogema, Minn.; Frank Horst, Culp, Ark.; Carl Kauffman, Kallispell, Mont.; Floyd Kauffman, Minot, N. D.; Nelson Kauffman, Elkhart, Ind.; Chester Koenig, Belleville, Pa.; William Kurtz, Loman, Minn.; Irwin Schantz, Loman, Minn.; Merle Yoder, Belleville, Pa.

NEWS AND NOTES

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chiefly in Holland, the Rhineland, and northern Germany. Bainton's study, *David Joris: Wiedertäufer und Kämpfer für Toleranz*, impressive for its thorough study of the original documents, was published at Leipzig in 1937. There can be no question that Joris was a leading person in the movement and that he was an apostle of toleration and reconciliation. Ordained a bishop by Obbe Philips he became the most prolific writer among Anabaptists. The spiritualism of Joris, along with the moral aspersions of his character, however, have never been cleared up sufficiently to move him towards the center of the movement. It is surprising to find that the English theologian, J. S. Whale, in *The Protestant Tradition, An Essay in Interpretation* (Cambridge, 1955), says, "Perhaps David Joris (c. 1501-56) comes as near as anyone to being a fair representative of sixteenth-century Anabaptism as a whole." (p. 205). Pretty much depends on one's definition of an Anabaptist.

THE AMISH AND TOBIT. The book Tobit in the Apocrypha was widely read among ancient Jews as a pious story, according to Bruce M. Metzger in *An Introduction to the Apocrypha* (New York, 1957), but among Christians the influence of the book has been felt chiefly at wedding ceremonies. The Amish provide a modern instance: "In the United States the Old Order Amish . . . have traditionally made this Apocryphal book the basis of the wedding sermon. A manuscript *Amish Minister's Manual* directs that, in addition to expounding passages of the Old and New Testament, the minister shall relate the story of Tobit." (pp. 40-41.)

MENNONITES IN JAPAN. The summer 1957 issue of *Japan Harvest* carries an article, "Mennonites in Japan," by Melvin Gingerich. It treats the beginnings of the various Mennonite activities in missions, relief, and peace and introduces Mennonite beliefs and practices.

JOSEPH FUNK AGAIN. Leonard Ellinwood, the author of the article about Singers Glen in the January *Bulletin*, is assistant rector at the Washington Cathedral and not organist, we hurry to correct. The Rev. Ellinwood, however, has a keen interest in church music and is engaged currently in a study of Funk's contribution to church music.

BAPTISTS AND ANABAPTISTS. The leader articles in two recent issues of *The Chronicle*, January and July 1957, treat at length "the true thrust of Anabaptism" and the relation of Anabaptist thought to the

English General Baptists. The author, James D. Mosteller, Dean of the Faculty at Northern Baptist Seminary, is concerned chiefly with "the perpetuity of principles," and finds much in common between the two movements. The study is documented and runs for more than a total of forty pages. *The Chronicle* is the quarterly of the American Baptist Historical Society.

THE FREE CHURCH TODAY. A new book by Franklin H. Littell, author of *The Anabaptist View of the Church* (1952), came off the press as 1957 came to a close. *The Free Church*, published by the Beacon Press at Boston, is a study in "the significance of the Left Wing of the Reformation for modern American Protestantism." Littell, an out-group authority (Methodist) on the Anabaptist movement, is thoroughly at home with the materials and problems of his subject. By the "Free Church" the author has primarily in mind the concept of the church as a community of discipleship. The chapters originally composed the Menno Simons Lecture Series given during 1954 at Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas. Unfortunately, a volume of 170 pages in 1958 bears the price of \$6.00.

FORKS MENNONITE CHURCH. The history of this Indiana congregation, written by John C. Wenger and reviewed in the October 1957 issue of the *Bulletin*, was privately printed at Goshen. It may be purchased for fifty cents from the Gospel Book Store, 119 E. Lincoln Street, Goshen, Indiana.

PATRONYMIC. One reader of the *Bulletin* points at the irregular spelling of many Dutch names in current Mennonite books and periodicals. A standard form of names, particularly surnames, is difficult to attain in any language, and concessions are usually made to custom as well as to the preference of individual family members. Many Dutch names in the 16th and 17th centuries, however, are unusual to English readers because they occur as patronymics. Such is the case with both Dirk Philips and Menno Simons. A patronymic is a surname which makes use of some device to indicate the father's name. In Dutch this is done by a suffix, as "Philipszoon," for example, in the case of Dirk Philips. The suffix, in common usage in both writing and speaking, is abbreviated to "Philips." This is sufficient to indicate the patronymic and is euphonically pleasing. Some scholars, however, prefer to indicate the patronymic as "Philipsz" or "Philips(z)." It would appear, then, that Dutch names of this sort have a fairly regular form when they are used in the original. Difficulty crops up, how-

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Ohio who settled in Elkhart County in 1864, and with Preacher John F. Funk who came in 1867. Efforts were made annually from 1867 until 1871 to effect permanent peace in the ministry of the Elkhart County Mennonites, but Wisler simply could not bring himself to accept the Sunday school and similar new institutions and practices. On Jan. 6, 1872 John F. Funk, on behalf of the majority of the ministers, announced that Wisler and his followers were no longer members of the church. Thereupon Wisler established his Old Order Mennonite Church, not only in Elkhart County, but also in Mahoning County, and elsewhere in Ohio. He fell over on May 1, 1889 and became unconscious. Since he was a heavy man (200 pounds or more) the folks who were with him ran for help. His son John and the latter's son Jonas helped place him on a couch a few moments before he expired. His body was interred in the old Mennonite cemetery east of the Yellow Creek (frame) Meetinghouse. He has an English tombstone. A number of efforts toward the healing of the Wisler schism were made, but Wisler always felt that he and his group were a happy fellowship, they were much closer to the ancient Mennonite practices and attitudes than were the "Funk" Mennonites, so there was no reason to attempt a reconciliation. If the more progressive group wished to return to the old ways, and drop the Sunday school, let them do so and join the congregation in which he had been a preacher since 1848, and a bishop from 1851. Bishop Christian Shaum and Preacher Martin A. Hoover preached at Wisler's funeral service.

The following Ohio bishops followed Jacob Wisler: Abraham Rohrer (1788-1878) of Medina County, John Shaum (1797-1882) of Wayne County, Peter Imhoff (1806-93) of Ashland County, Isaac Hoffer (1799-1880) of Williams County, and John M. Greider (1823-91) of Green County, as well as Preachers Jacob Kaempher of Wood County and Isaac Rohrer of Seneca County.

What a tragedy that Wisler and Funk were not able to resolve their differences, so that we could yet be one Brotherhood. Divisions do not build the Kingdom of Christ.

ever, when an attempt at translation is made. In "Dietrich Philip," the German form sometimes used, for example, the patronymic is entirely ignored. In most cases it is perilous to attempt translation of Dutch names and it is far better to stay by the original spelling.



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